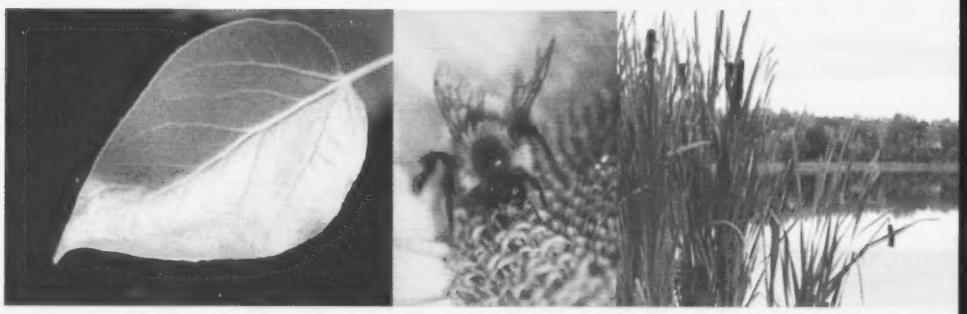
ALBERTA WATER COUNCIL



SEPTEMBER 2008

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS:
A Shared Governance Framework for *Water for Life* Collaborative Partnerships

Executive Summary

When the *Water for Life* strategy was released in 2003, the partnership model it described was only a vision.

The organizations, their relationships to one another, and how they would function existed only on paper. Since 2003, the Alberta Water Council and nine Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils have been created, while the number and sophistication of Alberta's Watershed Stewardship Groups has grown. These organizations have now functioned for a number of years, and it is timely to undertake a review of the shared governance framework in which they operate.

Shared governance refers to a governance structure where both government and other stakeholders share responsibility for the development and delivery of policy, planning, and programs or services, but where the government retains legislative accountability. Shared governance is a collaborative goal-setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication. Shared governance requires clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and relationships.

The recommendations proposed here are meant to strengthen the operation of that framework and build a foundation for *Water for Life* partnerships to "learn together, to manage together." Although more could be said, and more will be learned, this is a good foundation to move forward.

The Shared Governance Model

The shared governance model described in *Enabling Partnerships*, the partnerships proposed in it, and their general roles and responsibilities remain valid. However, the Project Team noted several aspects requiring further clarification.

Recommendation 1: The shared governance approach to water and watershed management should continue to be supported in Alberta by all *Water for Life* partners.

Recommendation 2: *Water for Life* partnerships are connected through a common adherence to *Water for Life* outcomes. A formal, hierarchical reporting relationship is not required, but improved information exchange and alignment of outcomes among partnerships is necessary.

Recommendation 3: Watershed planning initiatives launched by any partnership within a watershed must be aligned with the plans of the designated Watershed Planning & Advisory Council (WPAC), where one exists. Where a WPAC does not exist, local planning outcomes should be complementary and directed towards supporting *Water for Life* outcomes.

Recommendation 4: The sector model — securing participation based on four broad sectors — provincial government; industry; environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and other governments — is an appropriate partnership model for watershed planning and policy initiatives. It ensures that all stakeholders are involved and helps balance the many interests that must be accommodated.

Operating within the Shared Governance Framework

Partners in the *Water for Life* strategy need to improve their lines of communication, share more information, and integrate their outcomes and actions more effectively.

Recommendation 5: Partners must provide an effective link to their sectors. This includes exchanging information, seeking sector feedback, promoting adopted outcomes throughout their sector, and reporting on sector performance where outcomes require actions from that sector.

Recommendation 6: *Water for Life* partnerships should use a consensus-based decision-making process. They should also include a clear approach for dispute resolution.

Recommendation 7: The Alberta Water Council should work with WPACs and WSGs to produce a strategy for communications among the *Water for Life* partnerships.

Recommendation 8: All *Water for Life* partnerships should prepare a communications strategy to inform stakeholders about their operational policies and to keep them informed about the work of the partnership.

Recommendation 9: Notification to the general public is required at least when the terms-of-reference and final products of planning and policy initiatives are being presented to partners for endorsement.

Accountability

Water for Life is an Alberta Government policy and the Alberta Government plays a key role in the success of any *Water for Life* partnership.

Recommendation 10: The Government of Alberta must clarify how it intends to integrate recommendations, plans, and actions from *Water for Life* partnerships with its legislative and regulatory responsibilities as soon as reasonably possible.

Recommendation 11: The Alberta Water Council should continue to review the success of the shared governance system through its annual reporting process and take action to improve and support the system.

Resourcing *Water for Life* Partnerships

Successful partnerships require adequate resources, including money, human resources, expertise and information.

Recommendation 12: While the government of Alberta will remain a major source of funding and other resources, *Water for Life* partnerships must also look to all of their stakeholders for contributions to their operation.

Recommendation 13: The Government of Alberta, in consultation with its partners, must develop a "partnership resourcing formula" and clear funding commitments to address partnership and sector capacity issues. Adequate operational and project funding, released in a timely fashion, is critical for the success of these partnerships

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1.0 Introduction

During the development of *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*, Albertans said that they wanted to be involved in water management decisions. In the *Water for Life* strategy, the Government of Alberta clearly stated that water management is a shared responsibility to be carried out through partnerships with Albertans. To enable Albertans to be involved at the provincial, regional and local level, three types of partnerships were identified: a Provincial Water Advisory Council (now called the Alberta Water Council), regional Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and local Watershed Stewardship Groups. Each of these partnerships involves a cross-section of stakeholders working towards shared outcomes and goals. These goals, as stated in *Water for Life*, are:

- Safe, secure drinking water supplies
- Healthy aquatic ecosystems
- Reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy

The *Water for Life* strategy recognizes that water resources should be managed on a watershed basis. This encompasses both surface and groundwaters and those many activities on the landscape that impact our water resources. The strategy describes an initial framework for the shared governance of water management in Alberta. A subsequent document, *Enabling Partnerships*, provided more detail about the expected operation of these types of partnerships. In the five years that have passed since the strategy was released, the number and sophistication of *Water for Life* partnerships has increased, and an already-complex system of multiple stakeholders operating in a multi-jurisdictional environment has become more complicated. A policy gap analysis by members of the Alberta Water Council concluded that further exploration of the shared governance framework was needed. Therefore, it is timely to review the shared governance framework in Alberta and provide some recommendations for its improved operation.

In January 2007, the Alberta Water Council created a project team to review the existing approach to shared governance and improve the shared governance framework for water and watershed management in Alberta. This report is the result of their efforts. In undertaking this work, the Shared Governance Project Team found that the description of the framework in the 2005 document, *Enabling Partnerships*, remains valid, although changes could be made to improve the overall functioning of the system. While the Shared Governance Project Team is confident this revised shared governance framework will provide an improved foundation for *Water for Life* partnerships, the Shared Governance framework should be considered a 'living document' and be periodically reviewed to ensure it remains relevant to all Albertans.

The intent of this document is to clearly define how the three types of *Water for Life* partnerships and their constituent stakeholders will work together to achieve the *Water for Life* strategy's goals. Although there have been some challenges along the way, the project team has found through its review process that the partnerships model of shared governance still remains strongly supported in Alberta.

2.0 The Shared Governance Approach

The concept of shared governance has received strong support among the stakeholders consulted by the Project Team. It is an ideal that is shared by every sector committed to *Water for Life*. Although this ideal is strongly held, there are many nuances in the interpretation of how this concept applies to *Water for Life* partnerships. In the following sections of this report, the Alberta Water Council's recommended approach to shared governance is explained.

2.1 Defining Shared Governance

Governance refers to a formal process under which an organization or group of organizations makes decisions, determines who they will involve in the process, and how they will render accountability.

Shared governance refers to a governance structure where both government and other stakeholders have agreed to share responsibility for the development and delivery of policy, planning, and programs or services, but where the government retains legislative accountability. Shared governance is a collaborative goal-setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication. Shared governance requires clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and relationships.

In Alberta, shared governance is practiced in the provincial government's approach to water and watershed management under its *Water for Life* strategy. Stakeholders included in the strategy's shared governance framework include the provincial government, other orders of government (i.e. municipal, First Nations, Métis, federal), industry, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These groups work together and share the responsibility for recommending water policy, undertaking watershed assessment and planning, developing education and outreach, monitoring, stewardship and other programs, and delivering services to achieve the goals of the *Water for Life* strategy. In short, multiple stakeholders across Alberta are working towards achieving the same goals outlined in the *Water for Life* strategy.

Recommendation 1: The shared governance approach to water and watershed management should continue to be supported in Alberta by all *Water for Life* partners.

2.2 The *Water for Life* Partnerships

The *Water for Life* strategy recognizes that stakeholders need to be involved in water and watershed management at different scales. Therefore, to enable all stakeholders to be involved at the provincial, regional and local level, three types of partnerships were recognized in the strategy:

- A Provincial Water Advisory Council examines provincial-scale water policy issues.
- Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils evaluate and undertake planning on a watershed scale.
- Watershed Stewardship Groups encompass all groups and individuals undertaking local, on-the-ground actions to improve their local water body or watershed.

In all areas of activity, however, the provincial government retains its legislative accountability for water and watershed management in Alberta.

The Alberta Water Council (AWC)

The Alberta Water Council is the provincial water advisory council. It was created to provide a forum through which governments, industry, NGOs, and other stakeholders can apply their combined knowledge to examine provincial-scale water management issues in Alberta and provide solutions or recommendations for their improvement. The Council also regularly reviews the implementation progress of the *Water for Life* strategy.

Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs)

The *Water for Life* strategy describes the roles of Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils as engaging governments, industry, NGOs, and the general public in watershed assessment, planning and improvement. They produce state-of-the-watershed reports and watershed management plans and then seek to have their recommendations endorsed by municipal, provincial, and federal authorities. WPACs also have a role in public education and awareness by promoting conservation, best management practices and stewardship activities in their watersheds. Currently, there are nine WPACs established in Alberta (Table 1) with two more underway for the Peace and Athabasca watersheds.

Table 1. Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils in Alberta

Battle River Watershed Alliance
Beaver River Watershed Alliance
Bow River Basin Council
Lesser Slave Watershed Council
Milk River Watershed Council Canada
North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance
Oldman Watershed Council
Red Deer River Watershed Alliance
South East Alberta Watershed Alliance

Watershed Stewardship Groups (WSGs)

Watershed Stewardship Groups are a numerous and diverse group of partners. There are well over one hundred active WSGs in Alberta. They include many conservation associations and other societies created by cottage owners, agricultural producers, local governments and other local residents. They improve local water bodies and watersheds by undertaking "on the ground" actions, such as promoting best management practices, gathering water quality data, organizing shore-line clean-ups and providing education and awareness opportunities. Some WSGs have also undertaken sub-watershed assessment and planning activities.

Examples of WSG activities in Alberta include:

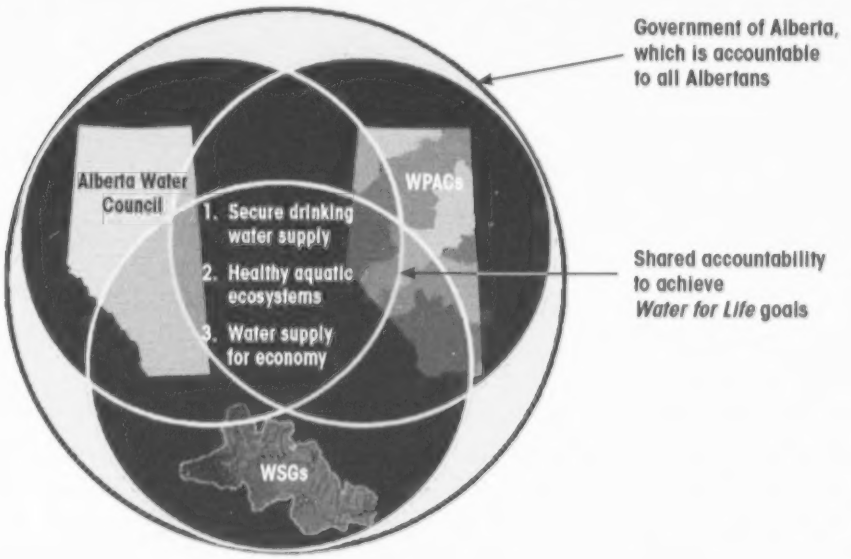
- a puppet show that educates children about water conservation
- building a crossing over a local creek to prevent ecological damage
- pulling invasive species from a local riparian area
- organizing water-themed fieldwork to support the Alberta school curriculum
- making solar-powered water dispensers for livestock available to ranchers so that cattle can avoid the riparian area
- undertaking assessment and planning activities for a local lake or river tributary

2.3 The Relationship Among These Partnership Types

The *Water for Life* strategy does not require a hierarchy or reporting relationship between these partnerships, however, their activities should complement one another (Figure 1). Partnership activities are essential for the effective implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy, and all partnerships must communicate with one another on a regular basis to ensure that policy, planning and actions are integrated and supporting the achievement of shared outcomes. This regular communication will ensure all partnerships are aligned as they work to achieve the *Water for Life* goals. Although there is no need to establish formal reporting relationships between them; there is a need to ensure their functional relationships in the areas of information exchange and outcome-setting are strong.

> **Recommendation 2:** *Water for Life* partnerships are connected through a common adherence to *Water for Life* outcomes. A formal, hierarchical reporting relationship is not required, but improved information exchange and alignment of outcomes among partnerships is necessary.

Figure 1: Partnerships have intersecting roles and responsibilities


Government of Alberta, which is accountable to all Albertans
Alberta Water Council
WPACs
1. Secure drinking water supply
2. Healthy aquatic ecosystems
3. Water supply for economy
Shared accountability to achieve *Water for Life* goals
WSGs

Watershed management plans should adhere to *Water for Life* and other Alberta government policies. Initiatives undertaken by Watershed Stewardship Groups should be aligned with outcomes contained in the relevant WPAC watershed management plan. In effect, each partnership overlaps at least in part with the other two partnerships. Because of their overlapping commitment to achieve *Water for Life* goals, membership as a partner includes common expectations including publicly reporting on performance toward achieving outcomes.

Effective two-way communication between the WPAC and WSGs is critical. Specifically, WPACs can support WSGs by:

- Providing them with relevant data and information
- Indicating what resources are available to them and how to find them
- Regularly sharing communications

In turn, WSGs can assist WPACs by providing detailed information about aspects of their sub-watershed to inform the WPACs evaluation and planning processes.

Watershed stewardship groups should have an opportunity to provide input to WPAC planning and assessment activities. Where WSGs themselves undertake sub-watershed planning, they are expected to follow this framework and align their planning with the relevant regional watershed plan, if one exists. This will ensure that goals, outcomes and actions are aligned between the plans. Otherwise, decision-makers and other stakeholders will have great difficulty in taking guidance from conflicting plans. It is a shared responsibility of the relevant WPAC and the WSG to ensure that the WSG's planning and assessment initiatives are aligned with the larger watershed management plan. In some major watersheds, such as the Peace and Athabasca River basins, WPACs have yet to be established. Where local groups are undertaking local watershed assessment and planning initiatives within these basins, these local initiatives should support WFL outcomes and in doing so should be complementary and contribute towards broader regional watershed management. For more information on watershed management planning, see *"Strengthening Watershed Management in Alberta"* at www.AWChome.ca .

Recommendation 3: Watershed planning initiatives launched by any partnership within a watershed must be aligned with the plans of the designated Watershed Planning & Advisory Council, where one exists. Where a WPAC does not yet exist, local planning outcomes should be complementary and directed towards supporting *Water for Life* outcomes.

2.4 Participation Based on Sector Representation

Everyone needs water and uses water. Everyone's activities have the potential to affect water quality and water quantity within the watershed. To manage watersheds effectively, all sectors of society must be engaged in and contribute to *Water for Life* partnerships. For partnerships to be successful, they should ensure all stakeholders have a seat at the table.

Alberta Water Council membership is based on securing representation from four broad sectors: provincial government, industry, other governments, and non-government organizations (NGOs). This model provides assurance that all stakeholders are recognized and given an opportunity to be involved in decision-making. Such representation will help balance the many interests that must be accommodated within policy development, planning and outreach activities. *Water for Life* partnerships should, as far as is practical, strive to implement this sector model of representation, particularly when developing policy or undertaking watershed assessment and planning initiatives.

Table 2: Potential sector representation in Water for Life partnerships

Industry	NGOs	Government of Alberta	Other governments
Chemical and petrochemical, forestry, agriculture (including livestock, irrigated crops, and other crops), mining, oil and gas, power generation.	Environmental, fishery habitat conservation, lake environment conservation, wetland conservation.	Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development, Alberta Economic Development Authority, Alberta Energy, Alberta Environment, Alberta Health & Wellness, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Water Research Institute.	Federal government, First Nations, Métis Settlements, large urban municipalities, rural municipalities, small urban municipalities.

In practice, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils may not include representatives from all of these same sectors in their assessment and planning initiatives. There are, for example, no Métis Settlements south of the North Saskatchewan River, nor are there any Irrigation Districts north of the Red Deer River. Some industry sectors may not need to be represented in some WPACs, such as forestry in the South East Alberta Watershed Alliance.

Watershed Stewardship Groups, generally operating on a smaller geographic scale than either the Alberta Water Council or WPACs, may be even further constrained in the choices available and necessity for complete representation from each sector. For WSGs who are not engaged in watershed assessment and planning, such broad sector representation is likely unnecessary. The organizing principle, however, is to ensure an appropriate balance among the diverse interests within a watershed in the development of policies, watershed assessments and plans. WSGs that undertake assessment and planning activities should strive for appropriate representation from industry, NGOs, governments, the Provincial Government, and the public in their activities.

Recommendation 4: The sector model — securing participation based on four broad sectors — provincial government; industry; NGOs; and other governments — is an appropriate partnership model for watershed planning and policy initiatives. It ensures that all stakeholders are involved and helps balance the many interests that must be accommodated.

2.5 The Role of the Provincial Government

Although the Government of Alberta participates as a partner in the shared governance model, it has additional roles and responsibilities that are defined by legislation. As a Cabinet-approved strategy, *Water for Life* outlines the Government of Alberta's vision and approach to water management in Alberta.

The Provincial Government is responsible for ensuring that *Water for Life* is implemented and that partnerships are an integral and vibrant part of an effective water management system. They are also responsible for helping stakeholders adopt the *Water for Life* shared governance model. For shared governance to be successful, the Government of Alberta must lead by example and be the most committed partner at the table. In terms of specific actions, the Alberta government is also responsible for the following:

- Delineating watershed boundaries
- Designating Watershed Planning & Advisory Councils under *Water for Life*
- Providing administrative, financial and technical support to partnerships
- Working with other stakeholders to help define and deliver core outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy
- Participating effectively on *Water for Life* partnerships and supporting their initiatives
- Monitoring progress towards the *Water for Life* goals as part of an adaptive management process
- Upholding its legislated responsibility, accountability and legal authority for water and land use management decisions
- Promoting the adoption of watershed management plans by all Alberta stakeholders

The provincial government is ultimately accountable for water policy, assessment, and planning. It plays a pro-active role in setting timelines and ensuring that initiatives contribute to *Water for Life* goals. As a participant in the shared governance model, the Government of Alberta has a responsibility to respond in a timely manner to recommendations provided by the *Water for Life* partnerships. The government should report back to these partners and demonstrate how it is changing its operations based on their plans and recommendations.

3.0 Operating within the Shared Governance Framework

There are several important concepts that apply to all of the *Water for Life* partnerships. These include some general principles, consensus decision-making, effective communications, engaging the public, and implementing the good work of these partnerships. These concepts are explained below.

3.1 General Principles

The following are proposed as shared-governance principles to guide partnerships in *Water for Life* initiatives.

- Partnerships must ensure they have mechanisms in place so that communication is open and transparent, allowing a good flow of input to their initiatives and good communication out to affected sectors.
- Partnerships will work to achieve *Water for Life* goals through an outcome-based planning approach to initiatives. Recommended outcomes should lead to actions, actions should have measurable results, and reporting on performance should lead to sustainable watershed management.
- Partnerships consist of a number of partners, each who may represent a particular sector. Partners must commit to promoting the decisions of the project team or partnership and communicating these with their sectors.
- Where decisions identify actions to be taken by members of specific sectors, partners must commit to reporting on the implementation of those actions to the project team or partnership.
- All partners — as individuals and on behalf of organizations — must share their expertise, information and resources.
- Water policy development, watershed management planning, and related programs and services must be coordinated with municipal, provincial and federal water and land-use planning and decision-making processes. They must be consistent with the Public Health Act, Municipal Government Act, Water Act, Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, Agricultural Operation Practices Act, Public Lands Act, Forests Act, federal *Fisheries Act* and *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and other relevant policies and legislation.
- The Government of Alberta will uphold its legislated responsibility, accountability and legal authority for water and land use management decisions.

Recommendation 5: Partners must provide an effective link to their sectors. This includes exchanging information, seeking sector feedback, promoting adopted outcomes throughout their sector, and reporting on sector performance where outcomes require actions from that sector.

3.2 Consensus Decision-Making

Consensus is a decision-making process that not only seeks the agreement of participants but also works to resolve or mitigate the objections of the minority to achieve the most agreeable decision. With consensus, participating stakeholders, at a minimum, "can live with" the group's decision. A stronger level of support is, of course, a preferred outcome. A healthy consensus decision-making process usually encourages and addresses dissent early, maximizing the chance of accommodating the views of all partners.

Among the ground rules necessary to achieve consensus is a deadline for decision. Partners cannot be allowed to stall progress simply by opposing a decision indefinitely. Partnerships must make it clear that a decision is expected of the partners by a specific date; partners who cannot support a given proposal are obligated to provide alternatives for further discussion — not simply to register their opposition.

Consensus need not be achieved on all proposed outcomes for a watershed plan to go forward. It is possible, for example, for a partnership to endorse eight of ten outcomes by consensus and to act on those eight outcomes, while referring the two disputed outcomes to its sector designates for further discussion.

It is important that all *Water for Life* partnerships clearly describe their agreed-to consensus and dispute resolution processes. The Alberta Water Council has not proposed a specific dispute resolution mechanism because it sees alternatives to consensus as undermining consensus. However, there may be instances in which a partner cannot endorse a decision without reservations. For example, "standing aside" means that a partner may not agree entirely with a proposal but is prepared to see it go forward — and to support its implementation — without comment. Issuing a "minority opinion" means that a partner disagrees with a particular proposal but, in the interests of shared governance, is prepared to see it go forward to implementation with its objection noted. In both cases, the proposal has still received consensus approval and so all parties are obligated to take appropriate action to see the proposal implemented.

If consensus cannot ultimately be achieved on a given issue, if the partnership has exceeded its own deadline with no reasonable expectation that a consensus decision may be reached, it may refer the issue to the Government of Alberta or other appropriate authority, with sufficient background information, so that the authority can deliver a decision. That decision would then be returned to the partnership and progress toward any associated outcomes would be reported just as progress is reported on consensus outcomes.

Recommendation 6: *Water for Life* partnerships should use a consensus-based decision-making process. They should also include a clear approach for dispute resolution.

When is Consensus Required?

The Alberta Water Council recommends consensus decision-making but notes that not all decisions require consensus. Partnerships should establish their own rules for decision-making identifying those decisions where a simple majority may be sufficient (for example, administrative or operational procedures). Decisions that establish plans, policy or programs that affect a majority of the stakeholders, however, should be by consensus.

Achieving consensus can be a challenging and lengthy process. *Water for Life* partnerships should understand that consensus is not likely achieved by gathering for a 'show of hands' on a single occasion. For partnerships with over 100 members, such an expectation is unreasonable. Accordingly, the Alberta Water Council proposes an adaptable structure in which "sector designates" are appointed to represent the interests of their sector in the development of policies, plans and other initiatives. Most sectors have existing organizations, networks or other established means of selecting such representatives.

The Role of Sector Designates

Sector designates will provide input to partnership initiatives and will facilitate their sector's review of proposed policies, watershed assessments, plans, and so on. Sector designates should work to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and acceptable to their same-sector colleagues so that when endorsement is sought, their colleagues have already had an opportunity to provide input. Sector designates must ensure that there is good communication throughout their sector.

Sector designates are not expected to carry sufficient authority to always speak on behalf of their entire sector, let alone the organization that appointed them. When all sector designates have given their consensus that a report or plan is ready, it should be sent to all partners who are represented by the sector designates for formal endorsement by their governing bodies. This requires appropriate signatories on behalf of the provincial and federal governments to commit their departments to take the actions directed at them. Municipal governments, First Nations and Métis Settlements may endorse state-

of-the-watershed reports or watershed management plans through formal resolution of Council. NGOs, most of which are non-profit societies, may indicate endorsement through a resolution of their boards or members. Industry partners will determine for themselves what level of authority is necessary to commit a given company to take action in pursuit of plan outcomes.

Sticking With the Process

As part of our democratic process, stakeholders often approach elected officials to advocate certain positions and urge government action. The government must hold *Water for Life* stakeholders accountable to the process by re-directing any attempt to 'go through the backdoor' back to the appropriate consensus decision-making process. Although any stakeholder has a right to lobby Government officials, lobbying about issues being addressed through the *Water for Life* partnerships should be directed back to the partnership table, where all stakeholders, including government, are involved.

3.3 Communications

The Project Team received a strong, clear message that good communication is fundamental to the success of shared governance. This includes communication between the different partnership types, among these partnerships, and within the participating sectors.

Communications Between the Three Partnership Types

As the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups are all working towards the same *Water for Life* goals, these three types of partnerships need to be fully aware of each others' activities. This will allow them to support each other and align their work so that conflicting messages among their plans and programs are avoided.

For example, the Alberta Water Council should work to strengthen its lines of communication with Water Planning and Advisory Councils so that its policy advice supports WPAC needs. Possible actions the Council could take to strengthen its relationship with WPACs include:

- Allocating time for WPACs to present annual updates to the AWC board of directors
- Co-hosting an annual forum to share ideas and issues with the WPACs about shared governance and water management
- Publishing a newsletter to keep its stakeholders, including WPACs, informed of its activities

Some of the Council's policy advice may also support WSGs, but little direct interaction occurs between these two types of *Water for Life* partnerships. That said, the Council's understanding of the roles and activities of WSGs should be strengthened and they should actively look for ways to interact with, and be informed by, Watershed Stewardship Groups.

There are a number of actions WPACs could undertake to improve their relationship with the Alberta Water Council, including simple measures like ensuring the AWC is included on WPAC newsletter distribution lists. As mentioned above, WPACs could share regular written progress reports with the Council's board of directors and they could work with the Water Council to co-host an annual forum to share ideas and issues about shared governance and water management.

Good communication between a WPAC and WSGs working within a watershed is also very important. For example, WPACs should be aware of WSG activities within the watershed and seek their input for watershed assessments and plans. Conversely, WSGs should be aware of regional watershed plans for their area and ensure that their work is aligned and benefits the larger watershed.

Recommendation 7: The Alberta Water Council should work with WPACs and WSGs to produce a strategy for communications among the *Water for Life* partnerships.

Communications Among WPACs and Among WSGs

Watershed Planning & Advisory Councils currently meet at least once a year to share their experiences at a WPAC Summit. This valuable practice helps to ensure that information such as best management practices, engagement strategies, and available knowledge, tools and experience are shared among WPACS of varying maturity and capacity. In addition, a newsletter, the *WPAC Connector* serves to share information between WPAC Summits and members from each WPAC engage in a monthly conference call. Despite the existence of these channels, WPACs have indicated that they continue to feel disconnected from one another. It is very important for WPACs to have a solid system of communication in place so they can learn from one another, set common objectives, and develop consistent messaging so they can present their interests as a united voice. WPACs should enhance the flow of information by creating a formal communication mechanism between the organizations.

For Watershed Stewardship Groups, the Alberta Stewardship Network offers an excellent forum for sharing information. It facilitates information exchange and provides support to individuals, communities and organizations working to advance environmental stewardship on a watershed basis. It has an informative website with directories of stewardship groups, resources and events. However, the ASN indicated that it is looking for ways of improve its communications. It indicated an interest in contributing to a communication strategy for *Water for Life* partnerships, specifically where WSGs are concerned.

Communications Within a *Water-for-Life* Partnership

Communication is very important whenever a variety of stakeholders work together. For participants in the AWC, WPACs, and WSGs, it is important that their purpose is clear, their processes are understood and participant responsibilities are understood and acknowledged. Policies governing the operations of these organizations must be clearly spelled out. For example, the Project Team learned that the consensus decision-making process is often not well understood. Each *Water for Life* partnership should inform its stakeholders about their consensus decision-making process, and the expectations and responsibilities of participating stakeholders.

It is also important that participating stakeholders are kept informed about the policies, watershed assessments, plans and other products that are being produced by these partnerships. Annual reports, newsletters, websites and other communications tools should be employed to ensure a good flow of information.

> **Recommendation 8:** All *Water for Life* partnerships should prepare a communications strategy to inform stakeholders about their operational policies and to keep them informed about the work of the partnership.

Communications Within Participating Sectors

Some sectors have well established systems for sharing information and gathering opinions from across the sector. Others may not have a formal means to do this. To ensure that the sector designates can fulfill their role in a *Water for Life* partnership, a good communications system is important. Each sector should work towards an improved system of communications to coordinate input to *Water for Life* partnerships and the dissemination of information from these partnerships throughout the sector.

3.4 Engaging the Public

Although the *Water for Life* partnerships bring a broad spectrum of perspectives to the table through their membership, the Alberta public has a major stake in watershed management and needs to be involved. Partnerships should strive to engage the general public as they develop policy, state-of-the-watershed reports, watershed management plans and other projects.

Some WPACs have direct representation from the general public on their Board of Directors. Currently, the Alberta Water Council does not have an established process for the public or non-member organizations to bring forward issues or concerns for the Council to address. The Alberta Water Council should establish such a process.

The Project Team considered whether there are key stages in the work of *Water for Life* partnerships when the public must be engaged. Most initiatives have some form of "terms of reference" that set the scope and expectations for the project. The Project Team concluded that public comment should be sought as the terms of reference are being prepared for state-of-the-watershed reports or watershed management plans. As well, public engagement during the preparation of these documents will increase their credibility and improve the final results. When the final reports and plans are being readied for endorsement by the partnership, the public should also have an opportunity to provide comment.

Recommendation 9: Notification to the general public is required at least when the terms-of-reference and final products of planning and policy initiatives are being presented to partners for endorsement.

3.5 Implementing the Work of the *Water for Life* Partnerships

In the *Water for Life* strategy, the Government of Alberta assigned specific roles to the AWC, WPACs, and WSGs. These roles, however, are not captured in legislation. This can present a challenge when these multi-stakeholder organizations try to implement plans or policies in areas in which they have no authority. (For example, think of a WPAC recommending the protection of an important wetland habitat as part of their watershed management plan. They don't have authority over the land to achieve that objective).

Shared governance addresses this challenge by emphasizing the 'collective' authority of these partnerships by involving those with authority in the development of their policy or plan. The partnerships themselves do not have authority. However, members of the partnership bring their own authority to the partnership table. If a shared outcome is agreed to, the authority to implement the required actions is already present. For example, if a municipality participating on a WPAC endorses a watershed management plan, they become accountable to the other stakeholders at the table for implementing the actions directed at them. In the previous example, this would include working towards the protection of critical wetland habitat under their control because they have endorsed and voiced their support for the watershed management plan. Endorsement by an appropriate Government of Alberta official will demonstrate commitment by a provincial department

to use the plan to guide decisions. In this way, *Water for Life* partnerships do have a kind of authority. Supporters of plans and policies developed by the Alberta Water Council, WPACs or WSGs involved in watershed planning must also publicly report on their performance as part of their on-going responsibility toward a supported plan or policy.

With the important and complex role of the provincial government in watershed management, the Project Team felt that it was especially important that all stakeholders understand how the government will incorporate the direction provided in policies and plans into their decision-making process. This is especially important because stakeholders invest so much time and effort into these processes and they need reassurance that this effort is worthwhile.

Recommendation 10: The Government of Alberta must clarify how it intends to integrate recommendations, plans, and actions from *Water for Life* partnerships with its legislative and regulatory responsibilities as soon as reasonably possible.

The Project Team discussed with stakeholders and legal counsel whether current legislation is adequate for effectively implementing the shared governance model. The Project Team concluded that the adoption of the *Water for Life* strategy as a Cabinet policy gives considerable force when considering structures and processes to achieve *Water for Life* goals. Shared governance is further reinforced through partner and partnership acceptance of the terms-of-reference for individual project initiatives. However, the success of shared governance under the current legislative framework has not been proven to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Recommendation 11: The Alberta Water Council should continue to review the success of the shared governance system through its annual reporting process and take action to improve and support the system.

4.0 Resourcing *Water for Life* Partnerships

The work of the *Water for Life* partnerships is important and it requires strong support from participating stakeholders. Adequate funding is needed and a commitment of human resources is very important. Sound policies, watershed assessments and plans, and other products cannot be produced without good access to data and information resources.

Not all stakeholder contributions need be financial. Many stakeholders may have small budgets, yet their in-kind contributions of time and expertise are very important and should be acknowledged.

Financial Resources

The provincial government is a major source of funding and support for the *Water for Life* partnerships. This is especially important for smaller watersheds or those with fewer stakeholders to draw upon. However, the provincial government should not be the sole funding agency of plans, policy initiatives, and on-the-ground actions that benefit multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the partnerships should actively request that their stakeholder organizations contribute financial, in-kind, workforce, and information resources to their initiatives.

> **Recommendation 12:** While the government of Alberta will remain a major source of funding and other resources, *Water for Life* partnerships must also look to all of their stakeholders for contributions to their operation.

The Government of Alberta is the primary source of operational funding for the AWC and WPACs. The government also provides some seed funding to WSGs, which is often leveraged by other in-kind and financial support from individuals, communities, businesses, other governments and conservation organizations.

Concerns have been raised about the timing and level of funding provided in relation to the tasks outlined in the *Water for Life* strategy. Funding needs to be released in a timely manner to make the most of planning, policy and stewardship activities. In order to address these concerns, the team recommends that the Government of Alberta work with the *Water for Life* partnerships to develop a resourcing formula that will outline their long-term and sustainable funding. Long term resources are required for the successful development, implementation and renewal of water policy, plans and actions for all types of partnership.

> **Recommendation 13:** The Government of Alberta, in consultation with its partners, must develop a "partnership resourcing formula" and clear funding commitments to address partnership and sector capacity issues. Adequate operational and project funding, released in a timely fashion, is critical for the success of these partnerships.

As was previously noted, the provincial government should not be the sole funding agency of plans, policy initiatives, and on-the-ground actions that benefit multiple stakeholders. The *Water for Life* partnerships should actively request that their stakeholder organizations contribute financial, in-kind, workforce, and information resources to their initiatives.

Some sectors have concerns regarding their ability to participate in multiple planning exercises — including the Land Use Framework, *Water for Life* partnerships and other resource and land management planning initiatives — in terms of both time and money. While the provincial government provides some funding to stakeholders who would not otherwise be able to participate, creative solutions may need to be found to address these stakeholder concerns and leverage participation between partnerships.

Human Resources

Implementing consensus decision-making requires that members endorse consensus decisions. This requires considerable staff capacity to contact sector colleagues and provide them with the necessary information to respond to a draft plan or policy. Adequate secretariat staffing is critical to the success of any consensus-based *Water for Life* initiative.

Data and Information Resources

Data and information sharing is a key direction of the *Water for Life* strategy, yet the *Water for Life*: Recommendations for Renewal report indicates that difficulties still exist in turning data into effective information for 'on-the-ground' action. WPACs and WSGs have stated that data collection, interpretation and analysis are the most expensive aspect of watershed management planning. Improved access to data, and associated analysis and interpretation, will reduce some of the difficulty in preparing watershed assessments and management plans. However, the provincial government should enhance the delivery of information to its partners by acting as the primary monitor, evaluator, and reporter on the status of Alberta's resources and working with others to bring additional data/information together. Partnerships are also looking for assistance in implementing consensus decision-making, strategic planning, conducting risk analyses and undertaking outcome-based planning in the context of watershed management planning.

In many cases, government staff have the information and expertise that are required for watershed management. As part of its commitment to *Water for Life*, government must ensure that these staff are available to *Water for Life* partnerships across the province.

5.0 Conclusion

The shared governance model proposed by the *Water for Life* strategy remains valid and supported in Alberta. Stakeholders are interested in participating in water and watershed management in a direct and active way. The partnerships proposed under the initial *Enabling Partnerships* framework remain valid and enable stakeholders to undertake that direct participation. Therefore, the Alberta Water Council recognizes that shared governance is strongly supported in Alberta and should remain so.

Stakeholders that participate in collaborative partnerships as part of the *Water for Life* strategy must recognize that they have specific responsibilities to one another, the partnerships, and the processes to which they have committed. Stakeholders must accept their roles and responsibilities to ensure the effective operation of the partnerships.

The *Water for Life* partnerships (the Alberta Water Council, WPACs, and WSGs) must strengthen their lines of communication to enable information sharing and the alignment of outcomes and actions to achieve the *Water for Life* goals. There are specific actions each level of partnership can undertake to strengthen their ability to participate in the shared governance framework and with one another. The partnerships should be prepared to work towards improved communication and alignment with one another.

Long-term and sustainable funding, released in a timely manner, is necessary for the effective operation of these partnerships. The Government of Alberta has specific roles and responsibilities in supporting these partnerships. Specifically, funding, information, and staff support for these initiatives are critical. The *Water for Life* partnerships must also work towards leveraging resources from their stakeholder partners.

Overall, shared governance is a valuable way for Albertans to participate in water policy creation and assessment, watershed management planning, watershed assessment, and on-the-ground, actions to improve their local water body. The shared governance framework provides the communication channels and outlines the roles and responsibilities necessary for the effective participation of Albertans in these initiatives.

Although this document was prepared by the Alberta Water Council, the advice contained within applies to all *Water for Life* partnerships. The implementation of the recommendations falls to all members of these partnerships. Over time, the Alberta Water Council will monitor and report on the achievement of this Framework for Shared Governance.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Accountability

Accountability is the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibility for actions, products, decisions, and policies including administration, governance and implementation within the scope of a given role or position.

Authority

A person or organization having power or control in a particular, especially political or administrative, sphere.

Endorsement

Endorsement is the act of partners within a partnership formally expressing their assent, publicly and definitively, to proceed with a policy, plan or initiative under *Water for Life*.

Partner

An individual or organization that shares the costs, risks, benefits, power and/or resources necessary to achieve a common objective.

Partnership

A voluntary organization of provincial, watershed, community and/or individual stakeholders who agree to undertake common or complementary activities, enter into agreements, and work together for the orderly, efficient and accountable achievement of results. These partnerships can make recommendations to improve watershed management to bodies with legislative authority.

Stakeholder

A stakeholder is an individual, organization or government with an interest in resource and environmental management in Alberta or who is otherwise affected by resource management decisions.

Watershed

An area of land that catches precipitation and drains it to a common point such as a marsh, lake, stream or river and recharges groundwater. A watershed can be made up of several sub-watersheds that contribute to the overall drainage of the watershed.

Watershed management plan

A comprehensive document that provides assessment and management information for a geographically defined watershed, including the analysis, actions, participants, and resources related to development and implementation of the plan.

Appendix 2: Project Team Methodology

From July through September 2007, the Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team interviewed 25 – 30 key players in watershed management planning from across Alberta to identify issues for further exploration as it developed the shared governance model and watershed management planning framework.

This input was used to develop a *Discussion Guide* that asked 21 specific questions related to watershed management planning and how best to involve the many stakeholders with an interest in water resources in shared governance and watershed management planning. A *Companion to the Discussion Guide* provided additional background information.

The Project Team then hosted four by-invitation, full-day, facilitated stakeholder workshops across Alberta in November 2007.

- Edmonton, Tuesday, November 20.
- Slave Lake, Thursday, November 22.
- Lethbridge, Monday, November 26.
- Calgary, Tuesday, November 27.

Participants were identified by Project Team members from each of the sector groups represented at the Alberta Water Council, with additional participation from Watershed Stewardship Groups, regional health authorities and First Nations.

Workshop participants received the *Discussion Guide* and *Companion to the Discussion Guide* in advance, and were encouraged to work their way through the 21 questions included in the *Guide* in preparation for the workshops. Workshop participants received a plenary introduction to the session, and then facilitators worked through each of the 21 questions with breakout groups of between eight and thirteen members, depending on overall attendance at each workshop. Participant comments were recorded but not attributed. Finally, workshop participants were encouraged to provide written submissions if they wished, either to emphasize particular points or to address issues that had been somehow neglected in the workshops. All input was summarized in the Project Team's "What We Heard" summary report, which is available on the Alberta Water Council's website at **www.albertawatercouncil.ca**.

The Project Team used the consultation report and background information to inform its debate about key issues to be resolved as it developed the shared governance model and watershed management planning framework. Consultants to the Project Team also undertook an international literature review to see what could be learned from the experience of other jurisdictions that have implemented something similar. They reviewed numerous publications and provided an annotated bibliography to the Project Team. In April, 2008, the Project Team hosted a full-day workshop with the Alberta Water Council to ensure that its evolving recommendations were consistent with the expectations of the Council. As well, individual Project Team members and support staff made presentations to several stakeholder groups during the weeks prior to submission of the Project Team's report to the Alberta Water Council in September 2008.

All of this input — the initial exploratory interviews, stakeholder workshops, Alberta Water Council workshop, feedback at stakeholder meetings, and the international literature review — contributed to the Project Team's deliberations in pursuit of the shared governance model and watershed management planning framework.

Appendix 3: Project Team Members

Thanks are extended to the following members of the Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team:

	Organization	Broad Category/Sector
Bob Cameron, Co-chair	South Peace Environmental Association	NGO — Environmental
Phyllis Kobasiuk, Co-chair	Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties	Government — Rural
Cam Lane	Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (later, Alberta Environment)	Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities
David Lloyd	Alberta Chamber of Resources	Industry — Mining
Lori Jeffery-Heaney	Alberta Urban Municipalities Association	Government — Small Urban
Dan Moore	Alberta Forest Products Association	Industry — Forestry
Tom Olson	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Government — Federal
Shirley Pickering	Highwood Water Management Plan PAC	NGO — Watershed Stewardship Groups
Ron Renwick	St Mary River Irrigation District	Industry — Irrigation
Tracy Scott	North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance	NGO — Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils
Bill Symonds	Alberta Municipal Affairs	Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities

Note: Tim LeClair, with the Métis Settlements General Council, participated in the initial work of the Project Team

Thanks also go to Tim Toth, Brian Free and Petra Rowell, all with Alberta Environment, for providing Secretariat support. As well, Michael Evans of Torque Communications wrote the initial drafts of the Team's reports.

Appendix 4: Terms of Reference

Alberta Water Council — Shared Governance and Watershed Planning Framework Project Team

Terms of Reference

Prepared by the Shared Governance Working Group

Starting Definition of Shared Governance (to be finalized by the Project Team)

Shared governance refers to a governance structure where both government and external parties share responsibility for development and delivery of policy, planning, and programs or services, but where government retains accountability. Shared governance is a collaborative goal setting and problem-solving process built on trust and communication. Shared governance requires a clear accountability framework with clear roles, responsibilities and relationships.

Background / Context

During the development of *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*, Albertans stated that they wanted to be involved in watershed management decisions. The Government of Alberta agreed with this desire and provided clear direction in *Water for Life* that watershed management is a shared responsibility with all Albertans to be carried out in partnerships with Albertans.

To enable involvement of Albertans at the provincial, regional and local level three types of partnerships were created, the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups. Each of these partnerships involves a cross-section of sector groups developing and working towards common watershed management outcomes.

Many questions have arisen regarding the relationship of these partnerships to each other, their relationships to existing decision-making authorities (including all orders of government) and the relationship of watershed planning to other resource and development planning. To address these questions the Alberta Water Council identified in their 2006 – 07 Operational Plan the need to develop a shared governance framework and a watershed management planning framework. Early on in these two tasks the Alberta Water Council recognized their strong connection and directed that a single Project Team manage them.

These terms of reference describe how these two tasks will be managed so that the shared governance framework and the watershed management planning framework are fully integrated as one project, managed by one team.

Guiding Principles

The Shared Governance Project Team will adopt the guiding principles of the Alberta Water Council. The Alberta Water Council, individually and collectively, is guided in its activities by a desire to be: collaborative, fair, innovative, respectful, timely, transparent, and trustworthy.

Meetings and meeting management: Members will exercise good meeting etiquette: good listening, open, honest communications, and members will 'be there' for each other. Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and provide relevant, timely and accurate information for the team's consideration. Sound meeting management will be followed; the Secretariat will record minutes and distribute them in a timely manner.

Working within the Sector: The Project Team will ensure those who need to be included are at the table. Team members should consult with their Sectors to ensure the Team discusses issues relevant to the Sector. The discussions and decisions of the Team should be relayed in a timely manner back to the Sectors to ensure accountability and transparency.

Issue identification and resolution: Members will ensure relevant issues are brought to the table for discussion, and that issues are resolved by consensus. Successful consensus decision-making often leads to more innovative solutions, but it requires a high level of trust and collaboration. Failure to reach consensus on an issue will be referred to the AWC for discussion, with a summary of the issue and differing views.

Participants in Council activities are also expected to be familiar with Council's media policy, which includes a protocol for responding to media requests.

Team Goals/ Results / Expectations

Outputs

There are two outputs:

1. Shared Governance Framework — a document that describes the roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and relationships involved in shared governance and the process by which shared governance can be established and maintained.
2. Watershed Management Planning Framework — a guideline document that describes the contents of and how to develop watershed management plans, who is involved, the relationships to other planning, approval and implementation of plans, and the integration with shared governance.

Outcomes

There are two outcomes:

1. Ownership and Commitment to Shared Governance by All Sectors — the description and process for achieving shared governance is embraced by all shareholders. The creation of the document is only a small portion of the desired outcome. The desired outcome of this task is that all sectors buy in to and work within the shared governance framework.
2. Ownership and Commitment to the Watershed Management Planning Framework — the essential elements and processes identified in the framework document are found to be necessary and sufficient for successful development and implementation of watershed plans. Again, the creation of the document is only a small portion of the desired outcome. For watershed management planning to be successful, all sectors must participate in the development of plans as described in the framework and all sectors must follow through with implementation of agreed-to actions in a timely manner.

Key Actions / Deliverables:

Scope

The following statements describe the scope of the shared governance and the watershed management planning framework projects.

1. The project will define what it means to be a partner in shared governance and what authority, responsibility and accountability comes with being a partner. In a consensus based decision-making process a method for indicating agreement and commitment to action may be required.
2. The project will define the relationship of the *Water for Life* partnerships, the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and Watershed Stewardship Groups, to each other.

3. The project will define who has authority, who has responsibility, who has accountability for watershed management, and the interrelationship of these three roles. The starting point will be to understand the authority, responsibility and accountability in the current governance model.
4. The project will define how to harmonize the goals and actions of shareholders that impact management and development in a watershed. The integration of watershed management planning with other mandated air, land, and natural resource management planning is required.
5. Given the current development of the Land Use Framework, an explicit and timely connection must be made between the Land Use Framework and the frameworks for shared governance and watershed management planning.
6. The project will address the balance between the expectations for various groups to be fully involved all the time, and the capacity for those groups to be involved. There may be a variety of ways to engage groups. The project will outline potential options.
7. The project will be guided, but not constrained, by current legislation. New legislation or legislative amendments may be required to facilitate the implementation of shared governance and watershed management planning.
8. The project will provide guidance for appropriate timing of approval and implementation of plans and recommendations coming from the partnerships. Clarification of the authority of a watershed management plan (as mandatory vs. advisory) and its relationship to other plans should be explored. Success and credibility of a governance model requires recommendations developed in plans to be implemented in a timely manner.
9. The project will define the process and provide guidance on re-engaging parties who choose not to participate. The project will develop a process to resolve differences when they arise and a dispute resolution mechanism. Success and credibility of shared governance requires all shareholders to participate in the process.
10. The project will create a new framework for watershed management planning that expands the current water management framework to incorporate all elements of watershed management, and embodies shared governance.
11. Success and credibility of watershed management planning requires appropriate and sustained funding. The project will define funding responsibility and an order of magnitude of the funding requirement.
12. The scope defined for these projects is meant to be enabling, not constraining. As the Project Team proceeds, it may encounter issues of scope that were not thought of by the Working Group in preparation of this terms of reference.
13. The project will stay connected with other Alberta Water Council projects and other Government of Alberta policy and strategy initiatives. This connection will ensure appropriate linkages are developed between initiatives.

Communication and Consultation

Three stages are recommended to develop the shared governance and watershed management planning documents.

1. **Gain initial understanding and ideas** — The project team must hold informal discussions with a cross section of potentially affected groups to obtain ideas and an understanding of shared governance and watershed management planning. This would logically focus on the AWC, WPACs and WSGs, as they are structured to include a cross section of groups. Any important groups that may not be included in the WPACs and WSGs should be contacted directly. The purpose of the contact is to gather initial thoughts and ideas and to let these groups know that the project is underway. This is not extensive consultation but rather contact with a sample of representative groups. It is anticipated that 15 to 20 contacts will be made at this early stage. Professional facilitation may be needed.
2. **Develop essential elements** — The project team will develop the essential elements of the shared governance and watershed management planning framework documents. These essential elements will include the main messages that the documents will contain. These essential elements will be tested with the AWC and with interested sector groups, which could include WPACs, WSGs, their component groups, or interested groups not represented on WPACs and WSGs. A list of interested sector groups should be prepared during the initial stage and added to as appropriate. This will involve more groups than the representative sample of groups used in the first stage. It is anticipated that 25 to 35 contacts will be made during this stage. Professional facilitation may be needed.
3. **Prepare draft documents** — The project team will prepare draft documents after receiving comments on the essential elements. The draft documents will be tested with the interested sector groups. Consultation consultants may be involved. It is expected that this consultation will involve several dozens of sector groups. It is anticipated that 60 to 80 contacts will be made during this stage. Professional facilitation may be needed.

Note: The project team will determine a more inclusive method of final consultation. This consultation will likely include WPACs, WSGs, municipalities, industries and environmental groups, to achieve acceptance of the project. General public consultation is not necessary for this project that is designed to outline frameworks for shared governance and watershed management planning. The public should be involved on projects that address environmental issues or develop watershed management plans that use these two frameworks.

Note: It is recommended that direct consultation and communication support be provided to this project. It is assumed that government staff could undertake the first two stages if capacity is available. However, it is recommended that a consultant handle the final stage.

Knowledge Required

To be successful in fulfilling the stated outputs, the following knowledge requirements are needed:

1. A shared understanding and acceptance of what shared governance means and how it should be practiced in the context of the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, and Watershed Stewardship Groups.
2. What are the current planning systems and governance models for water, land, and natural resources in Alberta? The project team may also consider reviewing current watershed management planning and governance systems in other jurisdictions that are recognized as successful models of relevance to Alberta.
3. What are the current barriers and opportunities in the development and implementation of watershed management plans? Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils should be surveyed for the opportunities and barriers that currently exist and could be addressed through the Framework for Watershed Management Planning.

Schedule of Key Actions / Deliverables

The two key outputs of the Shared Governance Project Team (SGPT) are the shared governance framework and the watershed management planning framework. Following approval of the terms of reference in early 2007 and the formation of the project team, the project team will report on and review the key deliverables with the AWC according to the schedule below. This staged approach will ensure that proper review, feedback and approval are obtained from the AWC prior to commencement of successive stages of the project, and that AWC leadership and engagement is maintained throughout the project.

Deliverable	Proposed Timeline	Responsibility
Finalize TOR	December 2006	SG Working Group
Approve TOR	January 2007	AWC
Form Shared Governance Project Team	February 2007	AWC
Develop Detailed Work Plan, Consultation Plan & Budget	February 2007	SGPT
Initial Consultation (Gain Initial Understanding and Ideas)	March/April 2007	SGPT & Consultation Support
Develop Essential Elements	May 2007	SGPT
Review Themes with AWC	June 2007	SGPT
Review Themes with Sector Groups	June/July 2007	SGPT & Consultation Support
Prepare Draft Documents	July/August 2007	SGPT
Consult on Draft Documents	Sept./Oct. 2007	SGPT & Consultant
Obtain Final Approval of Draft Documents by AWC	November 2007	SGPT
Prepare Final Documents	December 2007	SGPT
Adoption and Implementation of process outlined in documents	2008	SGPT/AWC/All Partners

Budget

Estimated costs for the project:

Gather New Information $20,000
- Literature review, initial contact of participants
- AENV + 2 - 3 members

Communication and Consultation $80,000

Gain Initial Understanding and Ideas (15 - 20 contacts) $20,000
- Workshop in each location (perhaps 6 communities) + lunch + travel
- 2 - 3 Project Team members
- AENV facilitation

Develop Elements (25 - 35 contacts) $20,000
- Member travel expenses (20 member trips @ $1000/each)

Prepare Draft Documents (60 - 80 contacts) $40,000
- Workshop in each location + individual meetings
- Contracted facilitation

Document Compilation & Printing $20,000
- $10,000 (each document) X 2 documents

TOTAL estimate **$120,000**

Project Team Structure / Membership

Although the project has two distinct components, it could be managed as one project by one team having two subcommittees that keep in regular communication. This has advantages and disadvantages. The project team will make the final decision about team management structure.

Membership

Members of the project team will represent the broad cross section of interests on the Alberta Water Council. Members are expected to be in contact with their Sector throughout the project to bring forward Sector knowledge.

It is recommended the project team be drawn from the following Sectors (listed by Category):

- Industry (3 Sector representatives) — Forestry, Agriculture, Oil and Gas
- Non-Government Organizations (3 Sector representatives) — Environmental, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, Watershed Stewardship Groups
- Government (4 Sector representatives) — First Nations-Métis Settlements (combined); Rural; Large-Small Urban; Federal
- Government of Alberta and Provincial Authorities (2 Sector representatives) — Municipal Affairs, Sustainable Resource Development

It is believed that this project will demand a significant amount of time of its members. Project team members should anticipate a commitment of about one year, comprised of one meeting per month (one day duration, plus ½ day (average) preparation), and work assignment equivalent of up to 10 working days. This totals 28 person-days for the year.

Role of Chairperson (or co-chairs, if team desires)

The project team's chairperson should be an Alberta Water Council member and will ensure reporting back to the Alberta Water Council as required. Project team members will select the team's chairperson or two co-chairs, as appropriate. Roles include:

- Chair meetings
- Include member agenda items
- Ensure the AWC's expectations of the team is clear
- Ensure the team has adequate support and necessary information to efficiently and effectively carry out its Terms of Reference
- Inform the team of other programs and initiatives to avoid duplicating work being addressed elsewhere
- Serve as liaison to the AWC and Government of Alberta

Role of Project Team Members

Members are expected to attend meetings regularly and provide relevant, timely and accurate information for the team's consideration. Team members should consult with their Sectors and others within their Category, to ensure issues are identified for discussion by the Team, and to ensure decisions made by the Team are relayed back to Sectors.

Members missing more than three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause will be asked to be replaced through consultation with the respective agency/Sector they represent.

Role of Secretariat

Under the guidance of the Chair, the Secretariat will prepare agendas, coordinate meetings, record discussions and develop progress and final reports that reflect the team's direction.

In co-operation with the Secretariat, a secretary will record meeting discussions and prepare a summary of meeting outcomes to the team, including action items. Minutes will be prepared in a succinct and unbiased manner.

Significant Parameters or Constraints

The following could be barriers to successful project completion.

- The project team must build awareness and understanding of shared governance with project shareholders, to have meaningful and effective collaboration with them.
- The degree of collaboration with shareholders will influence their commitment to and ownership of the process, and of project outcomes.
- The development and implementation of a collaboratively produced shared governance framework and a framework for watershed management planning is significant to the success of the *Water for Life* strategy.
- While timelines are ambitious, there is urgency to completing the project; lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities represents a risk to watershed planning.

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